

Meeting Record

MPO Technical Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 4, 2001
City/County Building, Room 113
Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: A. Abbott, R. Figard, M. Wullschleger, S. McBeth (representing A. Yonkey), R. Peters, R. Ruby, L. Worth, Kelly Sieckmeyer (representing V. Singh), Liz Wunderlich (representing Eldon Poppe), C. Riley (representing R. Thorson),

OTHERS: Ron Schlautman, Kevin Sameson (NDOR), S. Burham, J. Snowdon, (FHWA), Kent Morgan, Mike Brienzo, Duncan Ross (Planning), Brian Praeuner (StarTran) Rich Wiese (West "O" Business Association), Jim Becker, Doug Rath (landowners) and Karen Sieckmeyer (Public Works/Utilities)

STATED PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: Technical Committee Meeting

Allan Abbott called the meeting to order.

Agenda Item No. 1 - Review and action on the draft minutes of the October 9, 2001 Technical Committee Meeting

Mark Wullschleger moved to approve the October 9, 2001 minutes, seconded by Figard. Motion carried 9 to 1 with Sellman abstaining.

Agenda Item No. 2 - Update on the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County planning activities in the formulation of the New Lincoln-Lancaster Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan.

Kent Morgan updated the committee on the Comprehensive Plan Process. Kent explained how the Community Workshops are progressing and they are presently on target to have a draft Comprehensive Plan, with a Long Range Transportation Plan, available through the Comprehensive Plan Committee by the end of January. The Committee has looked at goals, provision statements, and various planning concepts, transportation land uses, sketch alternatives, and alternative transportation options. They are starting to bring the land use and the transportation plan together. Now they are in the process of looking at ways the transportation system can support the land use.

Kent then handed out the Scheduling Considerations for Balance of Planning Process for the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Workshops:

Planning Department has held between 5 - 7 workshops quarterly splitting the workshops between the City and County. At the last session, they had between 325 - 350 people which was very encouraging. There were a lot of questions and comments regarding transportation and land use issues.

The Governmental Service: Information and Idea Exchange:

The Government Exchange was a program in November where we invited all the different agencies from the City, County, School, and Water Districts. The representatives met at the County Extension Office to voice concerns in addition to being briefed on the plan.

County Board: Meeting with adjacent Counties:

The County Board Meeting met with eight surrounding jurisdictions in the adjacent counties. The County Board hosted a meeting with representatives from each of the surrounding counties.

Comprehensive Plan Subcommittees:

The Comprehensive Plan Committee, which is our text-tone committee, is a 14 member citizen group that Planning has been working with since the beginning of the process. They have structured themselves into five big issue groups. They are getting their subcommittee's organized and are to report back.

Mobility and Transportation Task Force:

This is an offshoot of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. It has seven members from the Comprehensive Plan Committee as well as seven or eight people that were added to the committee who had an interest either in bicycles, freight, pedestrian, public transportation or roads/highway. This committee has been meeting for several months with work to be completed on December 7, 2001. Some of the reports the committee have been working on were either handed out or mailed to you last week. Their recommendations will be forwarded to the Comprehensive Plan Committee. If the Technical Committee has issues, topics or concerns that need to be forwarded to them, Kent needs to know today so that he can forward them. Once this committee has finished their work, this information will be shifted to the Comp. Plan Committee.

Comprehensive Plan Committee:

The Comprehensive Plan Committee's task is to bring all of the information together that has been accumulated over the last year and put together a new Bridge and Land Transportation package and full Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Department's goal is to have a *draft* document by January 2, 2002 available for this committee to be able to work from.

As far as the subcommittee that was created at the last Technical Committee, this committee will continue to meet and respond to new issues that come up relative to transportation. This information will be passed onto the Comp. Plan Committee.

City-County Planning Commission:

After the Comprehensive Plan Committee has completed their work, it will move forward to the Technical Committee, Planning Commission, City Council and County Board. The Planning Department will be coming to the Technical Committee several times between now and the middle of February/March to ask the committee to respond on new issues. The Technical Committee will have

the opportunity to review the final document before it goes to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will receive your comments regardless if they are good or bad. March 13 and 27 are dates that are set aside for the public hearing. Sometime between now and the early March, we need to have the Technical Committee submit their recommendations. Planning Commission action is scheduled for April 3, 2002.

City Council and County Board:

In April and May, the Comprehensive Plan will be taken to the City Council and County Board. They would like joint public hearings and have an action meeting after that. Hopefully, we will have a new Comprehensive Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan by the end of May and June.

City of Lincoln/Lancaster County 2025 Pedestrian Plan:

Mike Brienzo started out by saying that the process for the Pedestrian Plan began in a workshop where 75 participants provided input into this process and it was their guidance that provided the frame work into this document. They thought it was very important to educate the public on the healthy lifestyles of walking and utilizing sidewalks and pedestrian systems. They emphasized the need for identification of safe school routes. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Workshop vision statement is to *“Elevate status of pedestrians and bicyclists in the community to be an integral part of the Transportation Plan”*. The Pedestrians Facilities Plan and Pedestrian Level of Service were the key issue for discussion. There are five pedestrian elements that the committee would like to incorporate into some guideline are:

- Directness - walking distance to and from locations. Every trip that you take begins with walking to a vehicle, a bus, a car, your bicycle. It is very important to identify a direct system to and from your destination.
- Continuity - Sidewalks should be complete without gaps.
- Street Crossings - Safety street crossings that are comfortable and not rushed or endangered when they get in the middle of the street.
- Visual Interest and Amenity - Pedestrians enjoy visually appealing environments
- Security - Pedestrians should be visible to adjacent properties and motorists.

Allan Abbott stated that this committee is saying something different from what has been done in the past. What this committee or plan is saying is that sidewalks are an integral part of the transportation network. The accommodation of pedestrians is as important as the vehicles on the street. Sidewalks are not an add-on that somebody has to prove that there is a need for a sidewalk before a sidewalk is built. This report is saying that you take a good look when developing a transportation plan. This is turning it around and saying we are accommodating pedestrians and bicycles and it is an important part of the transportation network and street system as accommodating the vehicles on the street. I think this committee needs to look at this and recognize that this is what the report is saying. You need to plan for the the sidewalk network as well as a street network.

Steve Burnham said that when he read the report, that is not what he understood. Allan said this is

what he understood that “*elevate status of pedestrians and bicyclists in the community to be an integral part of the Transportation Plan*”. That is what this statement means.

Steve mentioned that on page 4 under Actions: *Develop minimum pedestrians standards and guidelines for all new public works projects, including new roadways and reconstruction of existing roadways. These standards shall include street crossing treatment, sidewalk design, and landscaping.* Can we say a little more distinctly rather than this statement that says we will have some standards which will provide, in some cases, for some sidewalks. Allan felt the problem with doing it in this report is you’re doing what departments have to do but is this the Task Force recommendation to the Comprehensive Plan Committee that sidewalks become an integral part of the Transportation Plan and that cannot occur unless these design standards are developed. I don’t think we want to say to this group - go out and develop these design standards. This is saying this is the philosophy of the City/County that we need to do this. Steve said he was not asking this group to do the design standards. Steve is saying that he read this entire document and did not get out of it, what he got out of the statement that Allan just made. Steve would like this document to be a little more explicit in stating what it is that Allan said. This report says that you are going to have design standards and they will include when sidewalks will be put in and when they won’t. It doesn’t say that you will include sidewalks unless it can be proven that they are not necessary. Allan didn’t think he said that last statement exactly the way Steve had said it but rather that you couldn’t treat sidewalks as an add-on. As this goes through the process, Allan thinks the establishment of the activity centers will determine the appropriateness of sidewalk development as opposed to saying that if you have this situation you don’t build a sidewalk. Mike said that it does say that we will develop the minimum pedestrian standards and guidelines for all new projects and redevelopment projects. Those standards would be our guide and that is something we need to work through. Allan’s point is that the policy statement recommends that this committee is reviewing and if we are to have comments on this that we should not treat this report lightly. If we don’t comment on it, then we agree with everything that is here. Commenting on it may strength it but Allan just wanted to make sure that everyone read that statement.

Mike continued on with some of the action points. Mike pointed out on the map where commercial sites as well as school sites, and neighborhood centers generate high level of pedestrian activity. Liz Wunderlick thought we needed to show the private schools also on the map. Mike said they are identified on another map.

Steve wanted to know what was ultimately going to be in the Long Range Plan - a statement that minimum pedestrian standards and guidelines will be developed or the developed standards and guidelines. Kathleen Sellman answered that a statement similar to those that adequately expresses what it is that we expect not the standards themselves.

Ron Schlautman wanted to go back to Allan’s comments. He wanted to know if we could put Allan’s statement on the front page of the report as a recommendation. Allan said that he was trying to say what he thought this report was trying to say. This committee is going to have to decided if we endorse, have a problem with the statement, or if they want to state it differently. We are not going to revise the consultant’s report. Allan thinks that we need to comment on this report and provide input to the Comprehensive Plan Committee that we, as the Technical Committee, have reviewed this and we agree that this concept makes sense or we think it should be modified. Mike said the

comments would be sent on the Comprehensive Plan Committee for their review and discussion.

Randy Peters gave a hypothetical situation as how it would work on the fringe with the State and the City regarding cost participation of the sidewalk. Mike said what we can say is that it will be brought to the table on every project that we look at.

Mike pointed out that we did want the City, as well as the County, to develop an organizational focus to coordinate pedestrian and bicycle planning activities and that is part of what the Planning Department is recommending as well. Ron wanted to know on page 3 if the three +'s were better than two +'s or one +. Ron thought we might need a ledger to show what the +'s mean.

Bicycle Plan

Some of the key issues that were brought out is that they would like to see neighborhood bicycle connections to the business area downtown. They would like to see that all schools were incorporated into a bicycle plan where the children can ride their bikes to school safely and would not necessarily have to ride on sidewalks. One of the biggest elements that would change in Lincoln would be to consider on-street bike lanes. Some discussion was held on the difference between bikeway, bike path, bike lane, bike trail and bike routes. The Plan is looking for a seamless on-street/off-street bike routes. That would include all street signed routes, on-street bike lanes as well as a trail system. This would be incorporated into the existing urban areas. There is a call for a downtown bicycle facilities plan. This would require coordination between the Downtown Business Association as well as City Agencies and the University. We need to identify what routes there might be and how to address them. Right now our policy is that bicycles are not allowed on sidewalks so they have to go to the street. We need to find a way to make this safer. Roger Figard thought we needed to be aware of the tremendous controversy regarding the development of this as it directly conflicts with parking for downtown. Allan thought it would be appropriate for this committee to comment that there could be some conflict with parking and trails. Allan said he is also looking at the Department of Roads as some of the north/south and east/west routes downtown are state routes. John mentioned that he likes the suggestions about bike racks and parking facilities. John was wondering if we couldn't integrate some of the language in the report with mass transit where, because of the limitations of mass transit having a fixed route, that sometimes using these bike facilities to get to a bus and then take a bus across town might be a nice compliment. John mentioned that he could see the parking with the mass transit for the Park & Ride that was mentioned and he was trying to see if maybe entertaining the ideas that we could do a Park & Ride with bikes. Ron asked if they were looking at bike lanes because Public Works/Utilities had been against them. Mike said it is the recommendation of the task force. Allan said that if the Comprehensive Plan was approved with bike lanes in it then we would be changing our philosophy.

Liz. questioned what was meant by the third action point on page 3, *Select a short term demonstration project that embraces best engineering practices, bicycle design standards and minimum Federal guidelines for bicycle facilities*. Mike said that one of the recommendations was that when we develop those guidelines, we want to demonstrate the best engineering practices. Liz also questioned on page 5, *Develop bicycle education program as part of City's overall communication and education program*. Liz thought that program may be eligible for enhancement funds. Mike said one of the points that the task force pointed out is that we depend on private organizations to do this and cities and towns don't get involved in this process of education.

Public Transportation Element

Some interesting facts that come into this study is that we rely heavily on a fixed route system for our rider ship. 63% of riders are transit dependent so it is a very important part of our transportation system. For rider ship, 63% are work trips, 20% are school trips and 9% are for shopping. The following key points were made:

- Ongoing Monitoring of Transit Performance and Services
- Develop Pedestrian and Land Development Standards to Promote Productive Transit Service
- Maximize Transit Productivity
- Route Structure
- Roadway Development Standards
- Develop Long-Term Regional Commuter Rail Strategy
- Pursue Expanded Contract Transit Service Contracts
- Pursue Coordination of Special Transit Services
- Develop Long-Term Park and Ride/Transit Strategy
- Develop Long-Term Transit Funding Strategy

Freight and Goods Movement:

Duncan Ross gave a brief synopsis of the Freight and Goods Movement Study. This is the first report that the Planning Department had done in Lincoln and Lancaster County. The purpose of the report was to gather a sense of freight movement in our area. What the report did reveal is the majority of freight is delivered to our area by truck. We also have two large rail companies that provide service to Lincoln and for our air component - we have Lincoln Municipal Airport. Most of the freight coming to Lincoln by UPS or FedEx come through the Omaha Eppley Airport and trucked to Lincoln on the interstate. Pipelines were looked at and hazardous material that is transported on pipelines. On page 13 and 14, Duncan pointed out there were some planning elements. The study that was completed started with land use regarding freight and goods movement. Some of the guidelines to use when planning for freight and goods movement should be:

- Review existing policies concerning distances (i.e. buffers) between conflicting land users.
- Encourage the assessment of risk concerning hazardous materials and impacts on land uses.
- Enhance access to the external transportation connectors in order to minimize impact on existing land uses.
- Enhance the internal transportation routes in order to minimize impact on existing land uses.
- Develop a criteria for locating new high-freight destination land uses.

The report listed some organizational procedures for the Metropolitan Planning Organization, most of these items come through the office of Freight Management at the Federal level. FHWA has put a lot more emphasis on freight and good movement and we have picked up on a lot of the information and material that they have available. The Lincoln and Lancaster MPO should consider one or more action that address these organizational and procedural issues:

- Work with Nebraska Department of Roads to take a more pro-active role in analyzing freight flows and proposing specific freight improvement projects.
- Work with State and MPO to examine freight flows and issues at the regionally especially between Lincoln and Omaha.
- Establish MPO freight advisory task force.
- Institute a “short range” freight transportation improvement program.

On the data and analytical tool level, we have a lot of data that the agencies collect but we need to coordinate the information with private sources. The Federal government is working at doing some freight modeling. This is not available yet but they hope to see what they develop in the future.

There are maps in the back, of your packet, which shows information that was collected from the State regarding average daily traffic and heavy commercial vehicle traffic. There are maps concerning the number of trains on the different railroads coming in and out of Lincoln. The last map shows the County grain elevators and how they bring that grain into the Lincoln facility.

Future Road Network Working Alternatives:

Mike spoke briefly regarding the process in developing the recommendations for the roadway plan. They worked with the consultants, as well as staff, and use data from the State, Public Works, County and other agencies when developing the base assumption for the plan. They did validate the model with 1998 data and the Technical Committee did accept the validated model. Planning Department continues to use the same model in 2000 based on the 1998 validation. Mike had several maps that he was referring to when he explained how much information they use by looking at the map to develop traffic projections and land use. They look at this same data when they develop projects for the TIP, State TIP, and Six -Year Program. Mike went on to explain how they evaluate the network with the future land use growth scenarios.

Mike handed out the Working Alternative Road Improvements list and went over the projects which he will need comments back on.

Allan asked when we would get the task force recommendations? Mike said the task force meets December 7, 2001. They will go over the final data and information from the community workshops and then make their recommendation and send it to the Comprehensive Plan Committee which meets on December 14, 2001.

Allan asked when the Technical Committee would have an opportunity to review the task force recommendations? Mike said there was a scheduled meeting on January 22, 2002. Allan asked when this committee would get the recommendations so they can begin their review. The recommendations should be to the committee by early January. When they are submitted to the Comprehensive Plan Committee, the Technical Committee will get them also. They would like the comments back on the items presented today by December 21, 2001. Allan would like one set of comment from each entity mailed to Mike by December 18th and by the 21st we can conduct a email ballot if we need it. Allan apologized for the quick turn around time but everyone is on a crash

schedule.

Randy Peters was wondering how it works if one of these future base roads is adopted in the Comprehensive Plan. Will that effect the analysis that project traffic on projects that are in town. One scenario will have dramatically higher projections. Mike said the traffic projection is pretty much constant but what it does is changes the assignments in terms of routing.

Allan adjourned the meeting.